

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of controlling a secondary air stream in an exhaust system of an internal combustion engine of a motor vehicle equipped with an accelerator pedal, wherein engine actuation signals and sensor signals from an engine control system are evaluated in a secondary air control unit and used as control parameters for regulating the secondary air stream, said method comprising sensing the position of the accelerator pedal, transmitting a signal representing the sensed position of the accelerator pedal to the secondary air control unit, and regulating the secondary air stream in response to the sensed position of the accelerator among other control parameters.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein in addition to being transmitted to the secondary air control system, the sensed position of the accelerator pedal is evaluated in a central engine control and used to control at least one other engine function.

3. An internal combustion engine for a motor vehicle equipped with an accelerator pedal, an exhaust system, means for introducing a secondary air stream into the exhaust system, and a control unit for regulating the introduction of secondary air into the exhaust system; further comprising a sensor for detecting mechanical displacement of the accelerator pedal, and means for transmitting a signal representing detected mechanical displacements of the accelerator pedal to the control unit for regulating the introduction of secondary air into the exhaust system.

4. An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the exhaust system of the internal combustion engine comprises a catalytic converter, and the means for introducing a secondary air stream into the exhaust system introduces the secondary air stream upstream of said catalytic converter,

and wherein the exhaust system further comprises a storage catalytic converter connected downstream of said catalytic converter.

5. An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the means for transmitting the signal representing detected mechanical displacements of the accelerator pedal to the control unit for regulating the introduction of secondary air into the exhaust system comprises a vehicle-internal bus system which also transmits said signal to other engine control systems.